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Statement of Senator Mansfield to Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, Interior Appropriations Bill

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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MIKE MANSFIELD
MONTANA

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C. 20510

April 1, 1970

Hon. Alan Bible, Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I had hoped to be present during the hearing on the Interior Appropriations Bill but, as you know, the Senate will be opening early today, and my presence is required in the Chamber.

My colleague, Senator Lee Metcalf, will be presenting testimony today, and I have asked that he present for the record my statement in behalf of several projects which I feel should be given consideration by your Subcommittee. You will recall our discussions last year about research on MHD. This year, I hope the Subcommittee will be able to include funds for the first year of necessary research on this new process for power generation. Also, I have addressed the Committee's attention to the Big Horn Canyon Recreation highway development program and the deteriorating school situation on several Montana Indian reservations.

I am Thanking you for your cooperation and with best personal wishes,

Sincerely yours,

April 1, 1970

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D-MONT)
INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL - INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, as members of the Subcommittee know, the Interior Appropriations Bill is one of the most important to the western states. The funding of the various Federal agencies in this bill means a great deal to the development and welfare of the State of Montana as these are agencies which are generally very active in the Treasure State. A detailed discussion of each and every item of interest would be voluminous. My purpose today is to highlight two or three items about which the Montana Congressional Delegation has some very strong feelings and recommends Congressional support and appropriation of the necessary funds. My colleague from Montana, Senator Lee Metcalf, will be discussing other items of interest.

MHD Research

The first item that I wish to discuss is the Office of Coal Research's request for funds to begin a pilot program on magnetohydrodynamics or MHD. This is the process for production of electrical energy without boiling water to produce steam to turn generators. In the MHD process, the fuel is gasified at high temperature and passed through a magnetic field, thereby producing electricity.

The benefits of MHD are: (1) It is relatively pollution free; (2) It requires very little water, and (3) It can utilize low-grade coal which is not economically feasible to use in convention steam plants. You will recall, I am sure, our discussion of an increased appropriation for MHD research last year. The case was good then, it is urgent now. This nation is faced at once with a dangerously low supply of energy and increasing air and water pollution. We need desperately to meet our national energy requirements and to do so without further damaging the environment. MHD offers the best hope that I know of to accomplish both of those national purposes.

During the past six months a solid record of scientific support of MHD has been developed. Last October, at the Coal Symposium at Eastern Montana College in Billings,

Montana, attended by hundreds of industry and technical leaders from all parts of the country, a sharply augmented MHD research program emerged as the priority item.

Subsequently, Senator Moss, in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Interior Subcommittee on Minerals, Materials and Fuels, conducted hearings on MHD here in Washington on December 11 and on February 23. I submit, for the Committee's files and consideration, the proceedings of the Coal Symposium and the December 18 hearing. The February 23 hearings will be printed shortly, and I will see that Mr. Eaton receives a copy.

These hearings show that members of both parties, Dr. Lee DuBridge, who directs the President's Office of Science and Technology, industries and universities support a sharply increased Federal appropriation for development of this process. The technology is such that we are ready for one or more pilot plants. However, Mr. Chairman, the Budget Bureau has not seen fit to reflect in its recommendations the urgency of the situation. Only \$400,000 is included in the budget for MHD. What is needed, over the next several years, is an outlay of about 50 million dollars. That is a modest amount, alongside the benefits to be derived and the cost of developing new power techniques.

Our colleague, John Melcher, who represents Montana's Second Congressional District, put this appropriation in proper perspective in his forceful presentation to the Moss Subcommittee. Congressman Melcher said, and I quote: "(The) 50 million dollars (needed for MHD) is about 2.5 per cent of the total outlay for work on atom power generation. In this fiscal year alone, the Atomic Energy Commission is scheduled to spend more than five times as much for its civilian nuclear power program." I would add, Mr. Chairman, that the Congress has appropriated so far approximately 2.3 billion dollars for nuclear power development.

I believe that, as a result of the Moss hearings and the growing pressures on the power industry to increase their research and development, the Federal appropriation for MHD will be matched by industry. The amount of money which we are requesting for MHD in the 1971 budget is relatively modest, as expenditures in the field of energy go.

We recommend, in the strongest possible terms, a minimum appropriation of 2.5 million dollars for MHD research in fiscal 1971. The technical people say they need that amount to proceed with reasonable speed on construction of a pilot plant.

I want to underscore that we are asking for funding of a program which, over the long haul, will require some 50 million dollars. I make this request on behalf of Senator Metcalf and myself, knowing that its fulfillment implies a commitment to future spending in this area. We believe the MHD program is important to solution of national problems. We earnestly hope that you will share this view and increase the budget request by at least 2.1 million.

Big Horn Canyon Recreation Highway

The second item I wish to discuss is the Big Horn Canyon Nation/^{a1} Recreation Area highway development program under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. This is an item which is not included in the budget for the fiscal year 1971, but it is one which must be considered.

The Yellowtail Dam, which was constructed in southeastern Montana and created a large reservoir in Montana and Wyoming has one of the finest undeveloped recreation areas in the West. It offers great potential in developing new facilities in an area which is, undoubtedly, one of the most spectacular and natural wonders of our Continent. The one unfortunate aspect is that, at the present time, it is almost impossible to travel through the area because of the lack of a road system. Therefore, the construction of a road through the recreation area is the first and most important part of any orderly development plan.

I believe that Congress should take the initiative in funding of this road development program this year. Not only is it essential that we make this recreation area accessible to the travelling public as soon as possible, it has a direct relationship to the success of a large recreation facility being developed by the Crow Indian Tribe on Big Horn Lake.

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This facility, being funded by the Crow Tribe and the Economic Development Administration, would include a marina, lodge, campgrounds and related tourist facilities. The Crow Indians have taken on this project after feasibility studies subscribed to its soundness and projected tremendous tourist use of the Big Horn recreation area. These studies were, however, predicated upon a highway being constructed from Fort Smith, Montana, to Lovell, Wyoming. Some planning money has been made available. The time has come when actual construction will have to be started unless we are to hold back this major development.

In early February, representatives of the Crow Indian Tribe, residents of the city of Hardin and nearby Wyoming---all members of the Big Horn Canyon Highway Association--presented testimony before this Subcommittee. Prior to this, they had made a similar presentation for the Secretary of the Interior.

Each year the demands on our National parks and recreation areas increase tremendously, and the Federal Government cannot afford to postpone further development of new areas. The Big Horn National Recreation Area is one of the most logical and finest.

Senator Metcalf and I and our colleagues in the House of Representatives ask that Congress provide an adequate appropriation of funds to begin construction on this road during fiscal year 1971. Several million dollars would provide a minimum to start. I understand that the total cost of the project would be in the vicinity of 16 million dollars.

Schools - Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation

Mr. Chairman, the one remaining item I would like to discuss is the school situation on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeastern Montana. The Northern Cheyennes have progressed rapidly in development of their resources and have a number of physical improvements on their reservation. The one exception is their schools.

The secondary school at Lama Deer, a public school, is overcrowded and is in need of assistance and upgrading. There is no public high school on the reservation and many students are bussed many miles each day. There is a BIA school at Busby and it offers dormitory care and education at both the primary and secondary levels. None of the facilities are providing the job that is necessary. There are a number of differing opinions as to just what might be done. The Northern Cheyenne would like to see a new high school constructed at Lama Deer. This is a most worthwhile project and should be accomplished. They want to expand the secondary school and there is a question as to what should be done with the facility at Busby.

In view of the stringent budget limitations this year, I am not asking that the Congress provide an appropriation for an Indian school, but what I do wish to have done is to include language in the report on the Interior Appropriations Bill, directing the BIA within the next nine months to come up with a sound plan for a school system on this Indian reservation which will utilize the facilities at Busby and Lama Deer, including the construction of a new high school. Such a plan should give the Northern Cheyenne Indian children a better education within the public school system of the state of Montana, utilizing the Bureau's facility at Busby.

Before concluding, I would like to express some concern about a situation which is developing in conjunction with construction and modernization of schools on Indian reservations. Many of them are public schools operating under the jurisdiction of the State Education Departments. Because of the large Indian population, they are dependent upon Public Law 815 for construction money, but, unfortunately, the Federal Impact construction funds for Indian schools are virtually dried up. In Montana, we have several pending applications, but it is not likely that they will get any Federal funds for quite sometime. The schools are in a desperate condition and need help. I recommend that this Committee review the situation and, if necessary, we may have to turn to the direct appropriation for construction funds for Indian schools under the Interior Appropriation Bill.

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In conclusion, I wish to thank the Subcommittee and again stress that this bill means a great deal to the development and prosperity of Montana and to say that there are many, many important items in the bill---some being recommended by the Administration and some new ones we are asking to have included. The projects I have discussed today are the ones that I feel should be given prime consideration.